

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**SENT TO D.C.**

1-8-09

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Inland Steel Building

Other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

Street & number 30 West Monroe Street not for publication \_\_\_\_\_

City or town Chicago vicinity \_\_\_\_\_

State Illinois code IL county Cook code 031

Zip code 60603

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this x nomination \_\_\_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property x meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_\_\_\_\_ nationally \_\_\_\_\_ statewide x locally.

(\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Walter L. Loh /SHPO

Signature of certifying official

Jan. 8, 2009

Date

State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_\_\_ meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria. (\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official/Title                                  Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

=====  
4. National Park Service Certification  
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I, hereby certify that this property is:

- \_\_\_\_ entered in the National Register \_\_\_\_\_  
    \_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.
- \_\_\_\_ determined eligible for the \_\_\_\_\_  
    National Register  
    \_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.
- \_\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the \_\_\_\_\_  
    National Register
- \_\_\_\_ removed from the National Register \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_ other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper                                  Date of Action

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5. Classification  
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Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

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6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Commerce/Trade Sub: Office Building

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Commerce/Trade Sub: Office Building

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

International Style

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation: steel

Roof: Flat roof, tar

Walls: steel and glass curtain wall

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Industry

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance 1956-1958  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates 1958  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)  
N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder: Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill; Bruce Graham and Walter Netsch  
\_\_\_\_\_

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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10. Geographical Data  
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Acreage of Property .53 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone Easting	Northing	Zone Easting	Northing
1	_____	_____	3	_____
2	_____	_____	4	_____

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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11. Form Prepared By  
=====

name/title Allen Johnson and Emily Ramsey  
organization MacRostie Historic Advisors LLC date March 2008  
street & number 30 W. Monroe St, Suite 400 telephone (312) 782-4577  
city or town Chicago state IL zip code 60603

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Additional Documentation  
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Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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Property Owner

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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name BH Inland Realty, GB Inland Realty, RDC Inland Realty c/o Capital Properties

street & number 717 Fifth Avenue, 20<sup>th</sup> Floor telephone (212) 508-0140

city or town New York state NY zip code 10022

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to range from approximately 18 hours to 36 hours depending on several factors including, but not limited to, how much documentation may already exist on the type of property being nominated and whether the property is being nominated as part of a Multiple Property Documentation Form. In most cases, it is estimated to average 36 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form to meet minimum National Register documentation requirements. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, 1849 C St., NW, Washington, DC 20240.

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**Architectural Description**

The Inland Steel Building at 30 West Monroe Street is located within half a block of the geographical center of Chicago's central business district, known as the Loop. The building is comprised primarily of a nineteen-story, 252-foot tall steel frame office tower and a twenty-five-story, 332-foot windowless service tower that connects to the east side of the office tower. The building also has a three level basement with a seventy-two-car parking garage on the upper level and storage and mechanical systems on the two lower levels.

The primary massing of the building is the nineteen-story office tower. The tower is steel frame construction with a glass and steel curtain wall. The ground floor and the second floor level are recessed approximately twenty feet from the property line facing Monroe Street and recessed approximately twelve feet from the property line along Dearborn Street. The remaining seventeen floors are cantilevered over this recessed base, creating a covered outdoor area at the front and rear of the building. The underside of this canopy features a grid of distinctive square lights on the north and south ends. On the east and west elevations, seven exterior steel columns spaced twenty-five feet apart and covered in stainless steel jackets rise directly from the ground to the top of the tower. These columns connect to sixty-foot steel girders that carry the total weight of each floor. The office tower curtain wall, set between the exposed exterior columns, consists of two-foot by ten-foot spandrel panels of sixteen-gauge stainless steel backed by two inches of concrete fireproofing, and fixed double-paned, solar-tinted glass held into place with three-inch stainless steel mullions. Vertical mullions are spaced exactly five feet, two inches apart and horizontal mullions run two feet, four inches above the top of the spandrels, creating a precise grid along all the elevations of the office tower.

The twenty-five-story service tower is a windowless shaft set approximately twenty-five feet from the property line at Monroe Street and connected to the main office tower between the second and third exterior columns. The exterior of the service tower is covered in pre-cast concrete panels faced in stainless steel. Continuous vertical stainless steel mullions spaced five feet, two inches apart maintain the modular rhythm of the office tower curtain wall. The service tower houses passenger and freight elevators, two stairwells, two restroom areas, and a mail conveyor system. Electrical and telephone lines run from the service tower through a specially designed cellular floor system on each office floor. The twenty-first through the twenty-fifth floors of the service tower house additional mechanical rooms. A flag court occupies the open space between the service tower and Monroe Street on the south edge of the lot.

The below grade parking entrance is accessed by a ramp off of Dearborn Street, just north of the office tower.

The ground floor of the Inland Steel Building is divided into two primary spaces: an entry lobby on the south side and leased retail space on the north two-thirds of the ground floor. This space is accessed from a ground floor entrance located on the west elevation; the entrance is composed of a revolving door adjacent to a single door. The south-facing entry lobby is enclosed on the south, west and east sides by plate glass window bays in stainless steel frames. Two revolving doors on the south side of the lobby serve as the main entry to the building. In the steel lintels above the revolving doors, raised lettering that originally spelled "Inland Steel Building" has been replaced with "30 West



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Monroe Street" in identical lettering. The original lettering of the building's street number, "30", remains in steel lettering on the glass above the revolving doors. The interior of the lobby is finished with terrazzo floors. The ceiling in the main lobby space is a grid of continuous light panels in a stainless steel frame. This lighting system continues through the retail space north of the lobby. The north wall of the lobby is dominated by Richard Lippold's suspended metal wire sculpture, *Radiant One*, which sits in a shallow reflecting pool formed by a terrazzo curb. The reflecting pool and sculpture installation were added after the completion of the building.

A projecting wall of polished black Belgium marble serves as the backdrop for the sculpture and a dividing screen between the entrance lobby and the retail space behind. Bubinga wood paneling, which was added as part of a 1990 renovation of the building, flanks the marble screen, behind which are situated two glass doors providing access to the ground floor commercial space. Bubinga paneling appears again on the east wall of the ground floor elevator lobby, which houses the buildings mail system and was originally clad in black marble. The six stainless steel elevators, three facing north and three facing south, are set into walls of black Belgium marble. The ceiling in the elevator lobby, which originally featured the same lighting system as the main lobby space, was covered in 1990 with drywall and inset can lights. A new security desk was installed at this time, and the original glass in the windows behind the desk was etched with a decorative pattern.

The second floor of the building was designed as an open floor plan, similar to the general office spaces in the floors above. To preserve the two-story glass face of the recessed base of the building, the windows on the second floor are placed in a continuous pocket, a shallow well guarded by steel handrails that line the perimeter of the floor and separates the raised floor level from the wall plane. Originally, the second floor level ceiling featured the same grid of square light boxes seen on the underside of the cantilevered soffit on the south and north sides of the building, visually breaking the wall plane and creating a connection between exterior and interior spaces. The original ceiling and lights have been removed and replaced with acoustical panels and rectangular inset fluorescent light boxes. The open floor plan is now irregularly divided with permanent walls and non-original glass partitions.

The thirteenth floor cafeteria and nineteenth floor executive office suites are the only upper floors in the Inland Steel Building that were originally designed with permanent walls. On the nineteenth floor, executive offices were originally configured around a central hallway, with president Joseph L. Block, Jr.'s office occupying the southwest corner and vice president Leigh Block at the northwest corner. The board room occupied the east wall north of the front reception area. The board room table, twenty-seven feet of natural finished walnut planks supported with sleek mirror-finish steel pedestals, was so large and unwieldy that it had to be hoisted up the exterior of the building and moved into place through the window opening during construction. Much of the furniture in the executive office space, including the board room table and chairs, steel and wood desks, wood credenzas, and a distinctive chair of stainless steel mesh, was designed by Davis Allen, senior interior designer for Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill. The thirteenth floor cafeteria space featured a permanent kitchen space, centrally located on the south half of the floor and surrounded by cafeteria spaces, dining rooms, and lounges. The employee cafeteria and lounge occupied the north half of the floor. A separate dining room for managers and two private dining rooms were situated south of the cafeteria along the western wall. The south end of the dining floor held executive lounges and, at the southwest corner, the

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president's corner dining room. This space, with its six foot round walnut table inlaid with steel and Danish teak chairs, echoed some of the opulence found on the nineteenth floor. Today, both the thirteenth and nineteenth floors retain none of their original design. They have been gutted and completely reconfigured into general office spaces, and neither retains any evidence of the original floor plan.

The third through the twelfth and the fourteenth through the eighteenth office floors of the Inland Steel Building were all designed as completely open floor plates with no permanent interior partitions, and as such, can be detailed as a group. Each floor originally featured a grid of perforated acoustical ceiling panels manufactured by the Celotex Corporation that continued the five-foot, two-inch module established by the columns and mullions on the exterior of the building. This original ceiling system survives in some locations; however, individual panels have been cut up and replaced in many locations. The floor system on these office levels is a cellular deck of galvanized steel that was designed and manufactured by Inland Steel Products Company. This deck contained all of the electrical and telephone services for each office. A lightweight concrete slab covers the steel deck, which is in turn covered with finished flooring—in most cases, carpeting. With no permanent interior partitions, the space on these floors was originally divided using movable partition walls manufactured by the E. F. Hauserman Company of Cleveland Ohio. These partitions, which were steel-frame with steel, glass, or composite panels, were designed to fit into the five-foot, two-inch grid created by the Celotex ceiling system. The Inland Steel Company occupied the 12<sup>th</sup> through the 19<sup>th</sup> floors of the building, and historic plans and photographs suggest the way in which the general office floors (excluding the thirteenth floor cafeteria and nineteenth floor executive offices) were originally arranged. None of these original configurations are intact. However, several groupings of original Hauserman panels are still in use throughout the building, and serve as a testament to the lasting functionality and flexibility of the building's modular interior design system. The elevator lobbies serving each of the general office floors were a continuation of the materials of the main office space, with Celotex ceilings, modular lights, and cellular flooring covered in carpeting. Lobby wall surfaces on the general office floors are painted or wallpapered. The east wall of each elevator lobby housed a slot for the building's mail drop system, which terminated at the lobby level. Several of the lobbies retain the original ceilings, lighting, signage, and mail slots.

Overall, the Inland Steel Building has seen surprisingly little in the way of significant alteration since it was completed fifty years ago. As with most office buildings, the tenant spaces in the building's office tower and the connecting elevator lobby spaces and washrooms have been extensively reconfigured and redecorated many times. However, because the Inland Steel Building was designed without pre-conceived floor plans on most of its floors, these changes have not resulted in a wholesale loss of historic fabric. As stated above, the modular ceiling and floor systems remain on many floors, and several original Hauserman modular wall panels remain on selected floors. The entrance lobby has received only cosmetic alterations, including the addition of wood paneling on the north wall and east elevator lobby and the alteration of the elevator lobby ceiling, all completed in 1990s. The interior of the elevators was also refurbished with wood panels, stainless steel walls, new lights and carpeting. A majority of the building's original fixed, double-paned, solar-tinted glass remains intact. The Inland Steel Building remains a well-maintained, well-preserved, and remarkably intact example of a post-war International Style skyscraper.

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**Statement of Significance**

**Summary Statement**

The Inland Steel Building, completed in 1958, is significant under National Register Criterion C as a ground-breaking example of post-World War II skyscraper design. When it was completed, Inland Steel was the first modern glass skyscraper in downtown Chicago and the first major building to be constructed in the Chicago Loop since the Field Building was completed in 1934. With its dynamic stainless steel and glass curtain wall, emphatically exposed structural frame pulled outside the building envelope, and completely unobstructed office floors, the Inland Steel Building celebrated the significant technological innovations that had occurred in skyscraper construction in the interwar years. The Inland Steel Building brought the International Style of architecture to downtown Chicago and, in doing so, initiated the most transformative period in Chicago's architectural history since the days of the Chicago School in the 1880s and 1890s.

The Inland Steel Building is also significant under Criterion C as the first Chicago skyscraper designed by the architecture firm Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill. While Lever House in New York (1951) was the first International Style skyscraper executed by the firm, Inland Steel was the first SOM skyscraper to successfully combine the two ideals of Miesian architecture—the clear span structure and the rectilinear glass tower with exposed skeleton—with the firm's own emerging corporate design theories into a single building. Inland is also significant as a strong, early example of SOM's total design concept for corporate building, which merged exterior architecture and interior design into a cohesive whole. The success of the Inland Steel Building cleared the way for Skidmore, Owings and Merrill to become major players in the transformation of Chicago's skyline in the succeeding decades.

Designed to house the headquarters for one of the most powerful corporations in the country, the Inland Steel Building is significant under Criterion A for its association with the Inland Steel Company and the burgeoning twentieth-century steel industry. The company began on the outskirts of Chicago in a modest mill stocked with second-hand equipment in 1893 and emerged from World War II as the eighth largest steel concern in the United States and the only American steel company based in the Mid-West. The Inland Steel Building represented a conscious decision by the company to construct a headquarters that could "provide a unique institutional identification for the company over an extended period of years."<sup>1</sup> SOM's design for the Inland Steel Building gave the company nothing less than a brilliant, shining monument to the power and possibilities of steel.

**History of Inland Steel Company**

The Inland Steel Company had its beginnings in the failure of another steel operation, the Chicago Steel Works, which

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<sup>1</sup> "19 Office Floors Without Columns," Architectural Forum, April 1955.

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had produced farm machinery attachments from used steel rails during the 1870s and 1880s. When the Chicago Steel Works went out of business in 1893, Roswell Buckingham, the brother of the company's president, bought all of the machinery and began looking for a location to start a new business. That same year, he accepted an offer of six acres of land and \$20,000 for construction costs from the Chicago Heights Land Association to build a new steel plant in Chicago Heights, twenty-seven miles south of Chicago. Buckingham moved the dismantled equipment to Chicago Heights, but he was unable to raise the capital needed to start the business. Clarence Buckingham, Roswell's cousin and one of the many relatives and associates whom he solicited for assistance, advised him to abandon the project. Upon hearing of the opportunity, Clarence Buckingham's secretary, William M. Adams, decided to take a turn at raising the capital to get the machinery back into production.

Adams quickly located five local investors: George H. Jones, a neighbor and sales manager of a wholesale hardware firm; Jones' father-in-law, Elias Colbert; Joseph E. Porter, a farm implement manufacturer from Ottawa, Illinois; real estate operator Frank Wells; and John W. Thomas, a former Chicago Steel Works foreman. Even with this initial investment, additional capital was still required. In the summer of 1893, George Jones approached Joseph Block, a Cincinnati iron merchant whose firm, Block Pollack Iron Company, had been a supplier for the Chicago Steel Works. Block, who had brought his family to Chicago for the Columbian Exposition, was interested in the project, but when he returned to Cincinnati he was unable to convince his partners to invest company funds. Undeterred, Block put up his own money and brought his son, Phillip D. Block, into the venture. On October 30, 1893, the eight investors incorporated the Inland Steel Company, purchased the 40 rail cars of second hand machinery from Roswell Buckingham, and formally took over the contract with the Chicago Heights Land Association.<sup>2</sup>

Production began on January 16, 1894. Despite a rocky start, the company filled orders for over 3,000 tons of steel by the end of the first year and was able to report a fair profit to its stockholders. The following year, William Adams sold his shares of the company to Leopold Block, Joseph's oldest son, who moved from Pittsburgh to Chicago to manage the newly acquired and independently owned and operated Inland Iron and Forge. Emmanuel Block, Joseph's third son, joined Inland a few years later.

In 1901, the Inland Steel Company accepted an offer from the Lake Michigan Land Company to construct an open hearth steel plant on the southern tip of Lake Michigan, at what is now known as Indiana Harbor. To raise the one million dollars needed to build the plant, Inland sold the Inland Iron and Forge to Republic Steel for \$500,000, issued additional Inland stock, and secured bank loans. Production at the new plant began in July of 1902. By the time of Joseph Block's death in 1914, Inland Steel was a fully integrated steel manufacturer that controlled every step in the steel production process. The company had secured leases on three mines in northern Minnesota, purchased two 10,000-ton freighters to transport the iron ore to its mills, and was poised for tremendous growth. By 1917, Inland's annual production topped one million tons for the first time, and the addition of new furnaces, mills, mines and freighters during the 1910s and 1920s led to even greater subsequent increases in production.

<sup>2</sup> R. Gilbert and W. Korda *The Story of Inland Steel*. Rev. ed. Chicago: Inland Steel Company, 1984, p.1-3.

"Inland Steel Building" Commission on Chicago Landmarks, Nov. 1991.

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In 1930 and 1932, Inland built two new mills, both approximately half a mile long, to accommodate straight line production of steel bars, sheets, and strips. The sheet and strip mill, the largest mill of its kind at that time, cost fifteen million dollars to build during the height of the Great Depression. In 1935, Inland acquired Chicago-based Joseph T Ryerson & Sons, Inc., which was at that time the world's largest steel warehouse operation, in order to assure a steady market for Inland products. Inland also acquired two other companies, the Milcor Steel Company of Milwaukee and Wilson and Bennett Manufacturing Company of Chicago, which became, respectively, Inland Steel Parts Company and the Inland Steel Container Company.<sup>3</sup>

By increasing production capacity during the 1930s, Inland Steel was prepared to meet the demands of war time production during World War II. The company broke production records providing steel for bombs, shells, tanks, planes and ships. Under the federal government's Defense Plan Corporation, Inland built two additional blast furnaces and 146 coke ovens. The company received awards from the Army and Navy for "high achievement in the production of war material" and from the United States Maritime Commission for "outstanding achievement on vital wartime contracts." After the war, Inland shifted production back to consumer products, providing steel parts for washing machines, refrigerators, stoves, and automobiles, and greatly benefiting from the general post-war prosperity. Despite labor unrest in the steel industry during the early 1950s, Inland continued to expand. By the mid-1950s, the company had emerged as the eighth largest steel manufacturer in the country, and the only major steel manufacturer located in Chicago.<sup>4</sup>

Although Inland Steel's manufacturing plants were located outside of Chicago, the company had occupied office space within the city since 1898, when they opened a small downtown office in the Marquette Building, designed by Holabird and Roche and completed in 1894. In 1904, the downtown office moved to the First National Bank Building at the corner of Dearborn and Monroe Streets, designed by D. H. Burnham and Company and opened in 1903. Inland remained in the First National Bank Building for over fifty years and by the 1950s had expanded its presence there from a few rooms to over two full floors.<sup>5</sup>

In the early 1950s, Inland's president, Clarence Randall, created a planning committee to study the company's long range needs. One of the specific tasks before the committee was to examine the future space requirements for the company's general offices, which had been increasing steadily to accommodate expanding personnel. Two major concerns were the ability of the company to continue to secure additional office space in the First National Bank Building (which was at that time fully occupied) and the difficulties involved in modernizing and air conditioning their existing quarters in that building if the company chose to stay. Leigh B. Block, Vice President in Charge of Purchases, headed a subcommittee to examine the problem in depth and prepare a report or recommendations. As Joseph L. Block, grandson of Inland's founder and president of the company from 1953 to 1959, recalled in 1958:

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p.4-13.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 14.

<sup>5</sup> Inland Steel Company, "Leigh Block Remarks at Dedication, February 3, 1958, of the Inland Steel Building, Chicago", p.1-2.

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After careful study of various alternatives, the committee recommended that we build our own building, something none of us had previously envisioned. Their arguments were persuasive. We could have modern offices designed to meet the exact needs of our organization; by spacing tenant-leases we could be fortified for growth far into the future; and we could erect a structure which would be a credit to our company, our city, and our industry. Our officers and directors were convinced.<sup>6</sup>

Leigh Block took the lead in securing an architect to design the Inland Steel headquarters. He approached Nathaniel Owings, an acquaintance of Block's and a partner in the architectural firm Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill, and asked if the firm would be interested in the project. The firm, which designed only contemporary buildings based on the tenants of the International Style of architecture, had completed its first skyscraper, the New York headquarters for soap manufacturers the Lever Brothers, to great acclaim in 1952. However, they had yet to make their mark in downtown Chicago, which had seen no major new construction since the end of the 1920s. Skidmore accepted the commission. William Hartmann, a partner in the firm, was put in charge of the project. Walter Netsch, an MIT-educated architect and Chicago native who joined Skidmore in 1947, was initially charged with creating the design; when Netsch was called away to oversee the construction of the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, another SOM design partner, Bruce Graham, took over control of the project.<sup>7</sup> Davis Allen, an interior designer who had worked for the architecture firm of Harrison and Abramowitz before joining SOM in 1950, was put in charge of designing the building's interiors. Allen, who would also serve as head interior designer for the Istanbul Hotel, the Mauna Kea Beach Hotel, and the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library during his 40 years with SOM, had studied at the National Swedish Institute for Building Research in Stockholm before attending Yale University's School of Architecture.<sup>8</sup>

Inland chose a site directly across from its long time home at First National, a 191-foot by 120-foot site on the northeast corner of Dearborn Street and Monroe Street. The company negotiated the lease of the land in August of 1954. Demolition of the three existing buildings on the site began in September of 1955, and Turner Construction Company was awarded the general contract for the project in November of 1955. Foundation work began in January of 1956, and in November of that year, the company held a topping out ceremony as the final structural members were put in place. Construction continued through 1957, and the company moved into its offices on the top eight floors of the building in January of 1958. Final touches on the lower tenant floors and the installation of art work in the lobby were completed by mid-1958.<sup>9</sup>

The Inland Steel Building was not the first skyscraper to be completed in downtown Chicago in the post-war period.

<sup>6</sup> Joseph L. Block, "From the President's Desk", Inland News, Feb 1958.

<sup>7</sup> "Inland Steel Building" Commission on Chicago Landmarks, Nov. 1991. Pauline Saliga, ed., The Sky's The Limit: A Century of Chicago Skyscrapers (New York, 1990), p.60.

<sup>8</sup> "Davis Allen, 82, a Designer of Modern Business Interiors," New York Times, 23 May 1999.

<sup>9</sup> "Real Estate Notes", Chicago Tribune, 19 November 1955, p. B5. "Razing Starts Soon for New Inland Office," Chicago Tribune, 12 August 1955, p. C1. "Inland Steel Foundation Work to Begin," Chicago Tribune, 9 January 1956, p. C5. "Finish Frame of Inland's Skyscraper," Chicago Tribune, 2 November 1956, p C7.

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Naess and Murphy's Prudential Building, completed in 1955, holds that title. Inland was also not the first International Style building to be built in the city. By 1958, when Inland was completed, Mies van der Rohe's designs for the Illinois Institute of Technology's campus, along with his residential high-rises, including Promontory Apartments and 860-880 Lake Shore Drive, had simultaneously established and redefined the International Style in America. However, the Inland Steel Building was the first truly modern post-war skyscraper to rise in the city's center. Naess and Murphy's design for the Prudential was a continuation of the traditions of skyscraper design from the 1920s, which sought to conceal the steel skeleton behind elaborate masonry walls. The Prudential's heavy limestone façade stands in sharp contrast to the ethereal metal and glass exterior of the Inland Steel Building, which celebrated the technological advances of the intervening decades and introduced the International Style to downtown Chicago.

### **The International Style in America and the Rise of Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill**

In 1932, New York's Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art opened an exhibit titled *The International Style: Architecture Since 1922*. Organized by two American architectural historians, Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, the exhibit introduced American audiences to the distinctive style of architecture that had developed in Europe in response to the social upheaval following the devastation of World War I. The exhibit included works by Le Corbusier in France, Walter Gropius and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe of the Bauhaus in Germany, and J.J.P. Oud of Holland. These architects, Hitchcock and Johnson explained in the catalog that accompanied the exhibit, were united by their commitment to new structural technologies and their complete rejection of the architectural styles of the past. The proponents of the International Style viewed architecture as volume rather than mass, preferred rhythmic compositions of regular units or asymmetrical compositions to the axial symmetry of previous architectural styles, and eschewed all arbitrarily applied ornament. To achieve the desired effect of volume, International Style architects relied almost exclusively on cubic forms with flat roofs. By utilizing the relatively new technologies of concrete and steel skeleton construction, exterior walls were reduced to little more than a thin, smooth skin of glass, concrete, and metal.<sup>10</sup>

Although the International Style had found early expression in the United States in a handful of residences, the first of which was Richard Neutra's Lovell House in Los Angeles (1927-1929), the first American skyscraper to truly capture what architectural historian William H. Jordy has called the "bare bones esthetic of modern skyscraper design" is the Philadelphia Savings Fund Society (PSFS) Building.<sup>11</sup> Designed by George Howe and William Lescaze and completed in 1932, the PSFS Building is a dynamic, asymmetrical composition consisting of a two-story curved granite base, a twenty-nine story T-shaped office tower, and a three-story block that marks the transition between base and tower. The base of the building housed first floor retail space and an impressive second-floor banking room. The tower houses elevators, stairs and some utilities in the cross bar of its T-shape, and the off-center placement of the office slab ensured that all the office spaces received the maximum amount of light and air. The complex massing

<sup>10</sup> Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, *The International Style*, reprint ed. (New York, 1966).

<sup>11</sup> William Jordy, *American Buildings and Their Architects*, Vol. 5, (New York, 1972), 88.

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was, as Howe wrote in a letter to PSFS President James M. Wilcox, "an organic asymmetry...far more interesting than the usual scholastic and unthinking axial symmetry."<sup>12</sup>

Howe and Lescaze's treatment of the exterior of the PSFS Building was equally groundbreaking. The base of the building is a smooth skin of polished charcoal-colored granite punctuated by a thirty-foot high bank of windows that rounds the curved corner and marks the second floor banking room. Horizontal bands of aluminum windows wrap around the office tower, alternating with spandrels of mat gray brick. Projecting limestone columns break the horizontality on the tower's long elevations. These columns, a design element that the architects originally opposed but which the client insisted on, were an unusual constructivist element in such an early International Style building. Their use in PSFS anticipated the changes that would occur in the handling of the exterior plane and the expression of structure during the transition from the cubist European phase of the International Style and its constructivist American phase, which began with the arrival of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe to the United States in the late 1930s.

Mies, who had succeeded Walter Gropius as Director of the influential Bauhaus School in Germany in 1930 and had run the school until growing Nazi hostilities forced its closure in 1933, came to Chicago in 1936 as the new director of the Illinois Institute of Technology's School of Architecture. Although Mies was a well-known figure in the European world of art and architecture when he immigrated to the United States, it was in Chicago that he would solidify his reputation as one of the iconic figures of the Modern Movement. His designs for the IIT campus, begun in 1939, were the first examples of his new interpretation of the International Style, which focused on the clear and deliberate exposure of the underlying skeletal structure of his buildings.

However, war-time restrictions on building would prevent Mies from translating his vision to tall building projects until the late-1940s. In the Promontory Apartments, his first attempt at the design of a tall building in America, Mies' design for an expressive steel structure was hampered by a shortage of steel during the Korean War and by outdated local building codes. Mies was forced to compromise his vision, and the Apartments were built with a concrete structural frame. Not until the completion of the apartment complex at 860-880 Lake Shore Drive in 1951 did Mies achieve a true expression of his ideals in a tall building. The two identical twenty-six-story towers featured steel skeletal frames clearly expressed on the facades of the buildings. Set at right angles to each other, the towers were connected only at the lobby level by a flat, steel frame canopy. In addition to the forthright articulation of the structure and the integration of these structural elements into the glass facades, Mies also included several other features in 860-880 Lake Shore Drive that would become hallmarks of the new modern skyscraper, including rectilinear forms, monolithic massing and a recessed, glass enclosed-lobby surrounded by exposed structural piers.<sup>13</sup>

Although 860-880 Lake Shore Drive was arguably the purest, most austere expression of the glass skyscraper to emerge in the United States during the late 1940s, several other architects throughout the United States were busy erecting their own versions of the crystal tower. However, both Pietro Belluschi's Equitable Building in Portland,

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 93-94.

<sup>13</sup> Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (New York, 1971), 525-530. "IBM Building: Preliminary Summary of Information", Commission on Chicago Landmarks, 2007.



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Oregon, completed in 1947, and the United Nation's Secretariat in New York City, designed collaboratively by a team of architects including Wallace Harrison and Le Corbusier and completed in 1950, remained more attuned to the ideals of the early European modernists than to the new constructivist ideas advocated by Mies. Belluschi's design showed the structural grid, but the structural elements were subjugated into a smooth, membranous exterior. The Secretariat, with its narrow tower book ended by marble-clad masonry walls and its structural columns obscured behind textural glass curtain walls, was, as architectural historian William Jordy attests, "a lineal descendent of the *prismes purs* in Le Corbusier's 'early radiant cities'".<sup>14</sup>

If Mies' 860-880 Lake Shore Drive established the standard for the glass skyscraper, it was another architecture firm, Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, which would first establish the glass skyscraper as the new standard in corporate office building in the post-war era. The Lever House, designed by SOM for the Lever Brothers Corporation and completed in 1952, was the first major corporate headquarters in the United States to embrace the new style.<sup>15</sup> The office tower rises twenty-one stories on a one-story horizontal mezzanine, which is lifted from the ground by stainless steel piers. Rhythmically articulated curtain walls of blue-green glass and stainless steel with a sheen that deliberately calls to mind water and soap bubbles are the building's primary feature. Kept spotless by a special cleaning formula designed by Lever, the Lever House was SOM's first attempt at using architecture, and specifically modern architecture with modern materials, to express corporate identity. While many early International Style corporate building had explicitly, literally, spelled out the name of the client (the PSFS Building marquee and Erich Mendelsohn's Schocken Department Store in Germany are two examples), Lever House used subtler design elements to connect the building with the company and its product. The exterior of Lever House was also the first modern office tower to express the new character of large scale office building organization and planning, which called for unobstructed floor spaces, air conditioned interiors, and open space in the form of a plaza at the ground level.<sup>16</sup> All of these features, first used by SOM in Lever House, would later be perfected in the Inland Steel Building.

Skidmore, Owings and Merrill (SOM) began in 1935 as a partnership between young architects Louis Skidmore and Nathaniel Owings. Skidmore, a native of Indiana who received his education at M.I.T., was traveling through Europe when he met and fell in love with a fellow Indianan, Eloise Owings, who was studying fashion design in Paris. When Louis and Eloise returned to the United States to be married, Eloise introduced Skidmore to her brother, Nathaniel Owings. Owings, a graduate of Cornell's school of architecture, shared Skidmore's ambition, a head for business, and a determination to prove "that a talented architect, even in times of depression, could make a living at this business and still be an artist." In 1933, Skidmore was hired as chief designer for the Century of Progress Exposition at the Chicago World's Fair. He brought Owings on as development supervisor, and the two men formalized their partnership two years later.<sup>17</sup>

Skidmore and Owings had early on established that the firm would build exclusively "contemporary" designs, in the

<sup>14</sup> Jordy, 235.

<sup>15</sup> The Seagram Building in New York City, Mies' first major American corporate commission, would not be completed until 1958.

<sup>16</sup> Jordy, 255. Ernst Danz with Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *Architecture of Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill 1950-1962*. (New York, 1963) 3-4.

<sup>17</sup> "The Architects of Skid's Row", *Fortune*, January 1958, 160.

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"clean, uncluttered tradition pioneered by such European architects as Le Corbusier, Gropius, and Mies van der Rohe".<sup>18</sup> In 1936, a promising commission forced the firm to make another far-reaching decision. American Radiator Company offered Skidmore and Owings the chance to plan a small alteration to their New York headquarters. The firm would receive \$5,000 for the job, but the company insisted that one of the partners relocate to New York to oversee the work. Skidmore elected to make the move, leaving Owings to head the Chicago office, which employed three draftspersons at the time. As Skidmore later recalled, "a couple of guys like Owings and me could only feel comfortable if each had his own 'bailiwicks'... and the New York World's Fair was just starting and there were a lot of good consultantships around." From this decision would evolve an architecture firm that was national and decentralized, with regional offices that could work independently on smaller projects and join forces when needed to complete large, complex projects. To ensure that the firm would be prepared to handle any large commissions that might come their way, Skidmore and Owings brought architectural engineer John O. Merrill, a former partner at the Chicago engineering firm of Granger and Bollenbacher, on as a limited partner in 1939. Thus, Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill was established.<sup>19</sup>

In 1941, SOM received the large commission for which Skidmore and Owings had been preparing. The federal government hired the firm to create, from scratch, the city of Oak Ridge in Tennessee as part of the Manhattan Project. To handle the magnificent work load of this single project, SOM hired 450 additional employees, including architects, planners, and engineers, and set up a special office at the site. The project, which extended six miles along mile-wide Oak Ridge, eventually housed 15,000 families in 3,000 prefabricated houses, 13,000 dormitory units, 5,000 trailers, and 16,000 barracks. Additional government work, if not inspiring, allowed the firm to continue to expand through the war years.<sup>20</sup>

The commission for the New York headquarters of the British soap company Lever Brothers came in 1951. Gordon Bunshaft, who had joined SOM's New York office in 1949, was chosen as head designer for the project. The resulting building, celebrated by architectural critics and well-received by the general public, marked the beginning of a widespread acceptance of the International Style in the United States and cemented the reputation of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill as a firm that could execute modern buildings that met the needs of corporate clients. Set in the middle of Manhattan on Park Avenue, the building was a startling contrast to its neighbors, a shimmering jewel in a pocket of open space carved out of a wall of dark, masonry buildings. The Lever House was the first building in New York to use glass curtain wall construction. Its interiors were completely sealed and climate controlled with central air conditioning. The office tower itself occupied only twenty-five percent of its site, and the stilted of the mezzanine on stainless-steel covered piers left almost the entire site free for open space to the public. Unlike PSFS, which took full advantage of the rental possibilities of its ground floor space, Lever House has no tenants on the ground floor. A small portion of the ground space, tucked well under the building and enclosed in glass and marble, is given over to lobby and display areas, all open to the public. The hovering mezzanine housed an employee lounge and general office facilities. The base of the tower, which originally functioned as the employee cafeteria, opened out onto even more

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Christopher Woodward, *Skidmore Owings and Merrill* (New York, 1970), 11.

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open space in the form of a terrace on the roof of the mezzanine level.

As revolutionary as the design was, the form of Lever House stood in the middle ground between European and American modernism. The structure of the building was held behind the curtain wall, and the clear span of the office floors was interrupted by interior columns and an interior service core. Skidmore, Owings and Merrill would take the lessons learned from the Lever House and put them to good use in the design of its next large corporate project, the Inland Steel headquarters in Chicago. With their design for Inland Steel, SOM would plant both feet decisively on the side of the new American modernism, combining the two ideals of Miesian architecture—the clear span structure and the rectilinear glass tower with exposed structure—with their own emerging corporate design theories, into a single building.

### The Inland Steel Building

When Clarence Randall initially met with Nathaniel Owings to discuss ideas for the company's new office building, the Inland Steel chairman recalled, "I told him I wanted something very conservative and temperate. I said, 'I want to preserve the best of the past. I want this building to be like a man with immaculate English tailoring—his clothes are so good you are not aware of how well he is tailored.'"<sup>21</sup> Block later recalled that his primary request was that the building be a monument to and an advertisement of the company product. "We are the only major steel company with headquarters in Chicago," he said at the opening of the building in 1958. "We wanted a building we'd be proud of, one that spelled steel."<sup>22</sup> While Randall may not have gotten the conservative building he envisioned, SOM's design for Inland Steel exhibited the timeless style and exquisite town manners of a dapper English gentleman, and its boldly expressed structure connected the building to Chicago's illustrious and innovative architectural past. Block's request, however, was granted in full. SOM's design, a nineteen-story office tower with a separate twenty-five-story windowless service tower, was a celebration of the strength, the durability, and the lustrous beauty of steel.

The Inland Steel Building is, in essence, a Lever House turned inside out. The nineteen-floor office building, roughly two-thirds glass, is held in place by sixteen-gauge stainless steel spandrel panels backed with two inches of lightweight concrete and separated by thin, stainless steel mullions. This steel and glass curtain wall was reported to be one of the lightest, thinnest curtain walls ever used at the time.<sup>23</sup> Fourteen structural steel columns encased in stainless steel rise on the exterior of the building, seven each on the east and west elevations, connected by uninterrupted sixty-foot steel plate girders. The first two floors of the building, including the glass-enclosed lobby, are set back twenty feet from the building line on Monroe Street and approximately ten feet facing Dearborn Street, with the upper floors cantilevered over a small plaza. The service tower, a dynamic, ribbed column of brushed stainless steel housing washrooms, electrical and telephone lines, mail conveyors, elevators and stairways, is set back to make room for a flag court.

<sup>21</sup> "Inland Steel Showcase," *Architectural Forum*, April 1958, 89.

<sup>22</sup> "How to Spell Steel," *Time*, 10 February 1958, 82

<sup>23</sup> "19 Office Floors Without Columns," *Architectural Forum*, April 1955, 117. Inland Steel Building Fact Sheets, February 3, 1958. An estimated 200 tons of structural steel was saved by utilizing this new curtain wall.

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As the first major building to be constructed in the Chicago Loop in over twenty years, the project boasted an impressive number of structural innovations, many of which were developed by the Inland Steel Company. President Joseph L. Block once joked that the construction of the building was a "do-it-yourself" project for the steel company.<sup>24</sup> Inland developed the system of steel pilings that were used to anchor the building to the notoriously unstable Chicago soil; the building was the first skyscraper to be built on steel pilings instead of concrete caissons. Inland also developed a new system of steel beams and soldier beam piling that supported the weight of streets and neighboring buildings during excavation of the site. In addition, Joseph T. Ryerson & Sons, Inc., an Inland subsidiary, prefabricated much of the steel away from the job site and attached all the units with welding or high tensile bolts instead of rivets. The steel columns were assembled into two-story sections and fitted with stainless steel jackets and connections for floor girders and spandrel beams before being brought to the site. Girders, floor beams, and the steel plate panels used to cover the service tower were similarly pre-assembled.<sup>25</sup>

Technological innovations that had been used in Lever House were also put to use at Inland. Like Lever House, the Inland Steel Building was a fully air conditioned building and, as such, featured solar-tinted windows that were fixed in place. This was a first for a Chicago skyscraper—even the Prudential Building, completed in 1955, featured windows that could pivot open for cleaning—and was the topic of discussion in the local papers.<sup>26</sup> Inland was also the first major building in Chicago to be built with a basement parking garage, which was part of a three-level basement that also housed mechanical heating and cooling equipment and storage space.

Inland Steel was a defining project for Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill, not only as the realization of a bevy of modern architectural ideals, but also as an early example of SOM's strong stance on the idea of total design. As striking as the exterior was, it was also the logical means for achieving a completely modular and universally functional interior. By placing the columns on the exterior of the office tower, segregating the service spaces into a separate shaft, and containing heating, cooling, and utility supply lines within specially designed cellular floors manufactured by Inland Steel, SOM was able to design a skyscraper that had a truly open floor plate.<sup>27</sup> With 10,000 square feet of completely clear, flexible space on each floor, the Inland Steel Building achieved the ideal of universal space to a degree that had never been seen before in a tall building.

The precise five-foot, two-inch square module created by the columns and mullions on the curtain wall was carried inside to dictate the interior design for the building's office spaces. The one-foot square, spring-loaded, perforated metal ceiling panels, manufactured by the Celotex Corporation, were laid within a pattern of two-inch wide grid panels spaced sixty-two inches on corner in both directions. The openings formed at each grid intersection were filled with studs that could then anchor specially designed movable interior walls. Recessed light fixtures were designed to snap into the grids and were easily interchangeable. As a writer for *Interiors* magazine observed in 1958:

<sup>24</sup> "A Look at the Loop of the Future," *FF Saver*, March 1958, 4.

<sup>25</sup> Inland Fact Sheet.

<sup>26</sup> "Inland Unit Windows Are Non-Budging Kind," *Chicago Tribune*, 28 July 1957, A9.

<sup>27</sup> Inland Fact Sheet.

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Inland demonstrates that SOM has refined its point of view in office design as thoughtfully as its architecture for business. More than a style, SOM offers a superb formula, planned to meet the complexities of complete office design. And if no formula is imposed without a certain tyranny, it is perhaps this insistence that makes the SOM formula so often infallible. At least it can be said that the impressed captains of industry clients chose in their architectural tyrant their own design destiny.<sup>28</sup>

SOM's interior design solution for the office spaces occupied by the Inland Steel Company proved that rigid geometry could provide maximum flexibility.

An essential part of the geometry of Inland's general office interiors was the modular partition wall system. Designed by SOM and manufactured by the E. F. Hauserman Company of Cleveland, OH, the partition walls featured a frame of extruded aluminum posts that held panels of baked enamel, frosted or clear glass, wood, or synthetic material.<sup>29</sup> Most of the partitions included clear glass transoms, which help to retain an open feel within the enclosed office spaces, which were consistently 15' 6" deep and 10' 4", 15' 6", or 20' 8" long. Although descriptions of Inland's general offices (which occupied the twelfth, fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth floors of the building), indicate that all the floors were initially arranged in the same basic configuration, with any enclosed office spaces lining the east and west sides of the building, the partitions were designed specifically to be easily moveable.<sup>30</sup> The Hauserman Company confidently stated that "in use, it will be possible to make extensive changes in office space on any floor over a weekend without disturbing office routine."<sup>31</sup> In addition to compartmentalizing the wide open space of Inland's office floors, a portion of the partition panels and doorways were painted in bright primary colors—vivid blues, yellows, and reds—to break up long stretches of partition walls. Vice President Leigh Block enthusiastically told First Federal Savings of Chicago that "with color, and color alone, we have been able to control the apparent size of our offices and even to create definite mood patterns."<sup>32</sup>

Davis Allen's design for Inland's top executive office floor was a deliberate contrast to the bright colors and slick metal and glass surfaces of the general office floors. Carpeting and upholstery of natural materials in black, brown and white, solid wood furnishings and wall panels, and partitions of unpolished plate glass and teak form a foil for deliberate touches of steel—in the base of the board room table, in the specially designed stainless steel frames of the partition walls. Much of the furniture, although no longer extant, was designed specifically for the project by Allen. With his designs for Inland Steel, he helped SOM achieve an ideal of cohesive corporate environment, "with furniture, art, and functional and decorative objects integrated into a comprehensively planned space."<sup>33</sup>

<sup>28</sup> "Offices" Contract Series, Interiors, 1958, 112.

<sup>29</sup> "A Look at the Loop of the Future," FF Saver, March 1958, 4. "Inland Steel Building Features 'Totally Useful' Interior", Press Release for E. F. Hauserman Company, hereafter referred to as "Hauserman Press Release".

<sup>30</sup> "Offices" Contract Series, Interiors, 1958, 118-120.

<sup>31</sup> Hauserman Press Release

<sup>32</sup> "A Look at the Loop of the Future." FF Saver, March 1958, 4-5

<sup>33</sup> "Davis Allen, 82, a Designer of Modern Business Interiors," New York Times, 23 May 1999.

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Leigh Block, an avid and discriminating art collector, assisted in the selection of dozens of paintings and sculptural pieces as part of an ambitious acquisition program to equip the interiors of the building. Inland Steel Company also commissioned American sculptors Richard Lippold and Seymour Lipton to complete major works for important interior spaces. The only piece that remains in the building is Lippold's delicate web of enameled steel rods and steel wire entitled *Radiant One*, which was installed in the lobby of the Inland Steel Building in 1958. Lippold was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1912 and graduated from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1937. He worked as an industrial designer until 1941, when he first turned to sculpture. Lippold produced large, intricately arranged and precisely engineered constructions of sheet metal and suspended metal wire, an artistic direction he would continue to explore through most of his career. At the time of his commission for Inland Steel, Lippold was a faculty member at Hunter College in New York City. Set in front of a screen of black marble in a shallow reflecting pool and suspended from a special dropped ceiling panel, *Radiant One* was, *Art in America* declared, "a concentrated statement big enough to register as the evident core of a great structure housing a great enterprise."<sup>34</sup>

Inland Steel officially opened its doors on February 3, 1958. Chicago Mayor Richard J. Daley joined Inland President Joseph Block and other Inland officials in a ribbon cutting ceremony in the lobby of the building. For added effect, the ribbon was made of stainless steel and had to be cut with a pair of metal shears. Several hundred people attended the event and toured the building.<sup>35</sup> Inland occupied the top eight floors of the building, and the remaining eleven floors had been completely leased months before the building opened. The second largest tenant was Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, which initially rented two and one-half floors in the building for its company headquarters and later expanded to three. The firm remained in the building until 1978. Other tenants included: the Chicago Association of Commerce, which occupied the ground floor and mezzanine level office spaces; Draper and Kramer, Inland's leasing agent; the New York Life Insurance Company; A. O. Smith Corporation; investment firm White, Weld & Company; and the Chicago Restaurant Association, among others. Even with rental prices that were \$1.58 higher than the top price per square foot for space in the newly completed Borg-Warner Building and \$.83 higher than the most prestigious, rehabilitated pre-war Loop buildings, Inland Steel had no trouble filling the floors of its new headquarters. The success of the building heralded the beginning of a revival of the central business district in downtown Chicago, one that would see scores of buildings attempt to replicate the modern formula set down by SOM in Inland Steel.

The Inland Steel Building won critical acclaim almost immediately, and it has continued to be recognized for its revolutionary design. In May of 1958, the Chicago Building Congress presented the Inland Steel Company, Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, and Turner Construction Company with its annual award for outstanding building achievement.<sup>36</sup> In June of 1958, the Commission on Chicago Architectural Landmarks designated building, which was then not yet one year old, a Chicago landmark.<sup>37</sup> As M. W. Newman observed in 1992, when the Inland Steel received the

<sup>34</sup> "The Inland Steel Building and Its Art", *Art in America*, Winter 1957. "Richard Lippold." *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, 6th ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001-07. [www.bartleby.com/65/](http://www.bartleby.com/65/).

<sup>35</sup> "Inland Steel Opens Door of New Building", *Chicago Tribune*, 4 February 1958, B7.

<sup>36</sup> "Building Achievement Award", *Chicago Tribune*, 10 May 1958, 11

<sup>37</sup> "Architectural Honors Given 9 'Landmarks'" *Chicago Tribune*, 26 June 1958, B6. The validity of this honorary designation in the first

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Twenty-Five-Year Honor Award from the Chicago Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, the Inland Steel Building has remained "urbane, polished....dapper but not brash, an elegant headquarters building that enlivens the streetscape".<sup>38</sup>

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years of Chicago's preservation movement would be confirmed by an official designation with protective ordinance in 1998.

<sup>38</sup> "Inland Steel Building Still an Example of Polished Grace," Chicago Sun Times, 12 September 1992, 3.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The Inland Steel Building sits on the northeast corner of West Monroe Avenue and North Dearborn Avenue, encompassing the entire parcel associated with 30 West Monroe Street.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire parcel of land occupied by and associated with the building at 30 West Monroe Street.

UTM References

Zone 16

447 840 Easting 4636 510 Northing

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Section Photograph Continuation Sheet Page 20 Inland Steel Building, 30 West Monroe Street  
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**Date of Photographs:** February 19, 2008

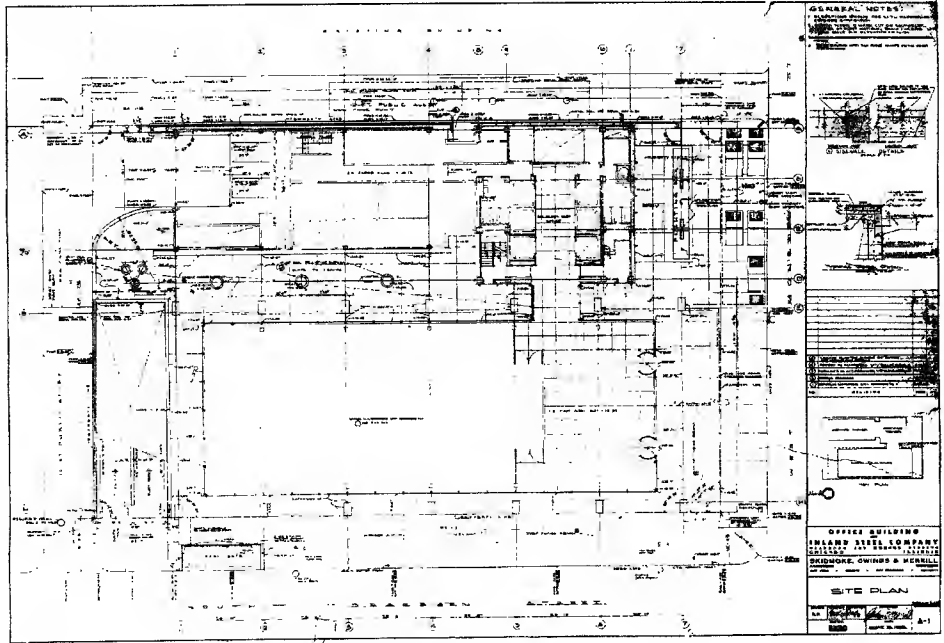
**Photographer:** Emily Ramsey for MacRostie Historic Advisors LLC  
30 W. Monroe Street, Suite 400  
Chicago, IL 60603

1. North and West Elevations, Facing South
2. West Elevation, Facing East
3. Service Tower, North Elevation, Facing South
4. Loading Dock, North Elevation, Facing Southeast
5. Corner of Dearborn and Monroe Streets, Facing Northeast
6. South Elevation, Facing Northwest
7. North Elevation, Ground Floor, Facing South
8. Lobby and Mezzanine, Facing Northwest
9. Ground Floor Office Space Detail, Facing South
10. East Elevation Showing Columns, Facing South
11. Entrance Lobby Interior, Facing South
12. Entrance Lobby Interior, Facing Northwest
13. Entrance Lobby Interior, Facing East
14. Entrance Lobby Interior, Facing West From Elevators
15. Entrance Lobby Interior, Paneling Detail, Facing North
16. Second Floor Interior, Southwest Corner, Facing South
17. Second Floor Interior Window, Facing South
18. Fourth Floor Office Interior, Facing North
19. Sixth Floor Office Interior, Facing North
20. Seventh Floor Elevator Lobby, Facing West
21. Seventh Floor Office Interior, Southwest Corner
22. Seventh Floor Office Interior
23. Ninth Floor Office Interior, Facing East
24. Fourteenth Floor Office Interior With Hauserman Partition Detail, Facing North
25. Fourteenth Floor Office Interior, Window Detail, Facing North
26. Fifteenth Floor Office Interior With Corner Column Detail, Facing South
27. Seventeenth Floor, Hauserman Partition Detail
28. Eighteenth Floor Office Interior, Facing West
29. View from Elevator Lobby Window of East Exterior Elevation, Facing North
30. Nineteenth Floor Office Interior, Facing North

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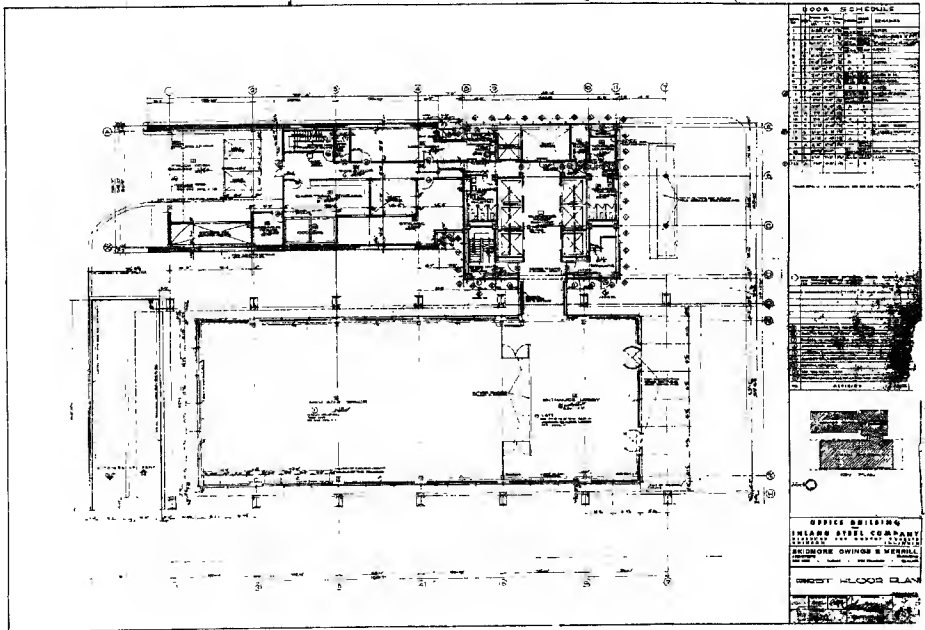


Original Site Plan, ca. 1955

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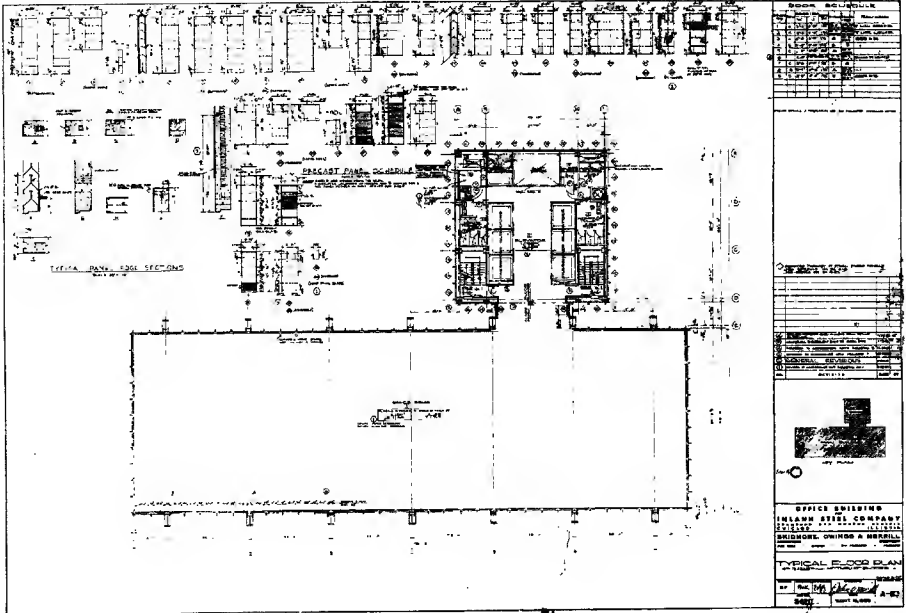


Original First Floor Plan, ca. 1955

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Original Typical Office Floor Plan, ca. 1955

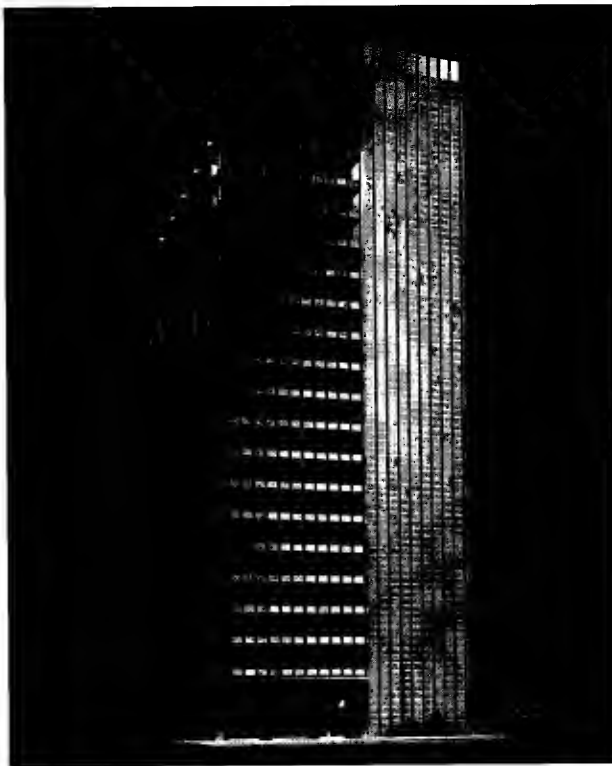
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**Model of Inland Steel Building**

you.

If you have any questions or concerns in this regard please contact Alexis Abernathy, alexis\_abernathy@contractor.nps.gov, 202-354-2236.

February is African American History Month. Celebrate with the National Register: <http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/feature/afam/INDEX.HTM>

**WEEKLY LIST OF ACTIONS TAKEN ON PROPERTIES: 2/17/09 THROUGH 2/20/09**

**KEY: State, County, Property Name, Address/Boundary, City, Vicinity, Reference Number, NHL, Action, Date, Multiple Name**

**GEORGIA, HENRY COUNTY,**  
Lawrenceville Street Historic District,  
Lawrenceville St. roughly between the Henry County Courthouse square and GA 20,  
McDonough, 09000054, LISTED, 2/20/09

**ILLINOIS, COOK COUNTY,**  
Independence Park,  
3945 N. Springfield Ave.,  
Chicago, 09000023,  
LISTED, 2/18/09  
(Chicago Park District MPS)

**ILLINOIS, COOK COUNTY,**  
Inland Steel Building,  
30 W. Monroe St.,  
Chicago, 09000024,  
LISTED, 2/18/09

**ILLINOIS, COOK COUNTY,**  
Spiegel Office Building,  
1038 W. 35th St.,  
Chicago, 09000025,  
LISTED, 2/18/09

**ILLINOIS, HAMILTON COUNTY,**  
Cloud, Chalon Guard and Emma Blades, House, 300 S. Washington St., McLeansboro,  
09000026, LISTED, 2/18/09

**ILLINOIS, KANE COUNTY,**  
Wing Park Golf Course,  
1000 Wing St.,  
Elgin, 09000027,  
LISTED, 2/18/09